

January
2022

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MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS
INTERNATIONAL

REPORT FROM THE GROUND

BOSNIA

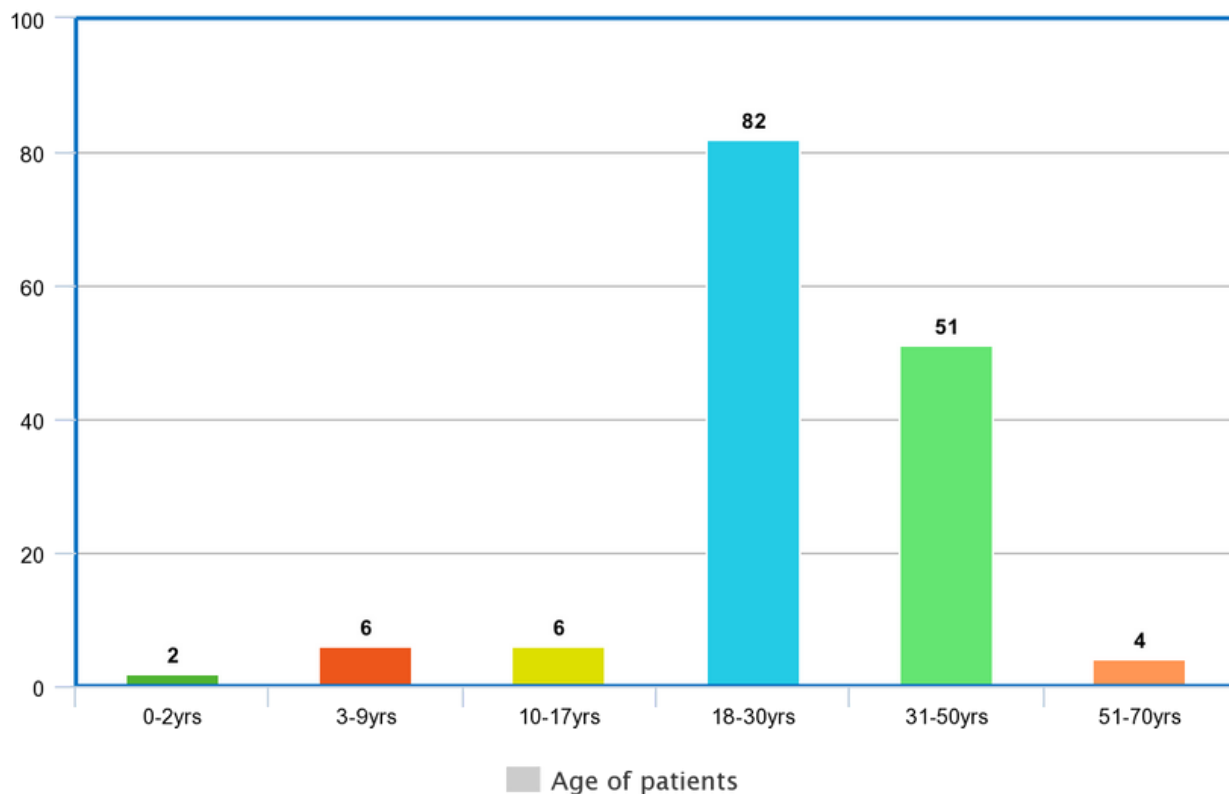


Demographics in Bosnia, January 2022

The team in Bosnia has been reduced in size in the recent months to become a one doctor, one nurse team. This is not only due to the routes that people on the move (POMS) are taking changing but also due to the reduced number of people going on the game (slang for the attempt to cross the border) during the winter month. With conditions falling frequently to below zero and snow in the high areas, it is dangerous for POMs to cross the border. A lot of people stay in refugee camps or return to Sarajevo over the winter months however there are some POMs who stay in the area which without our medical team would be unable to access adequate health care. We predict the numbers of people in the area will increase as the weather becomes warmer in March.

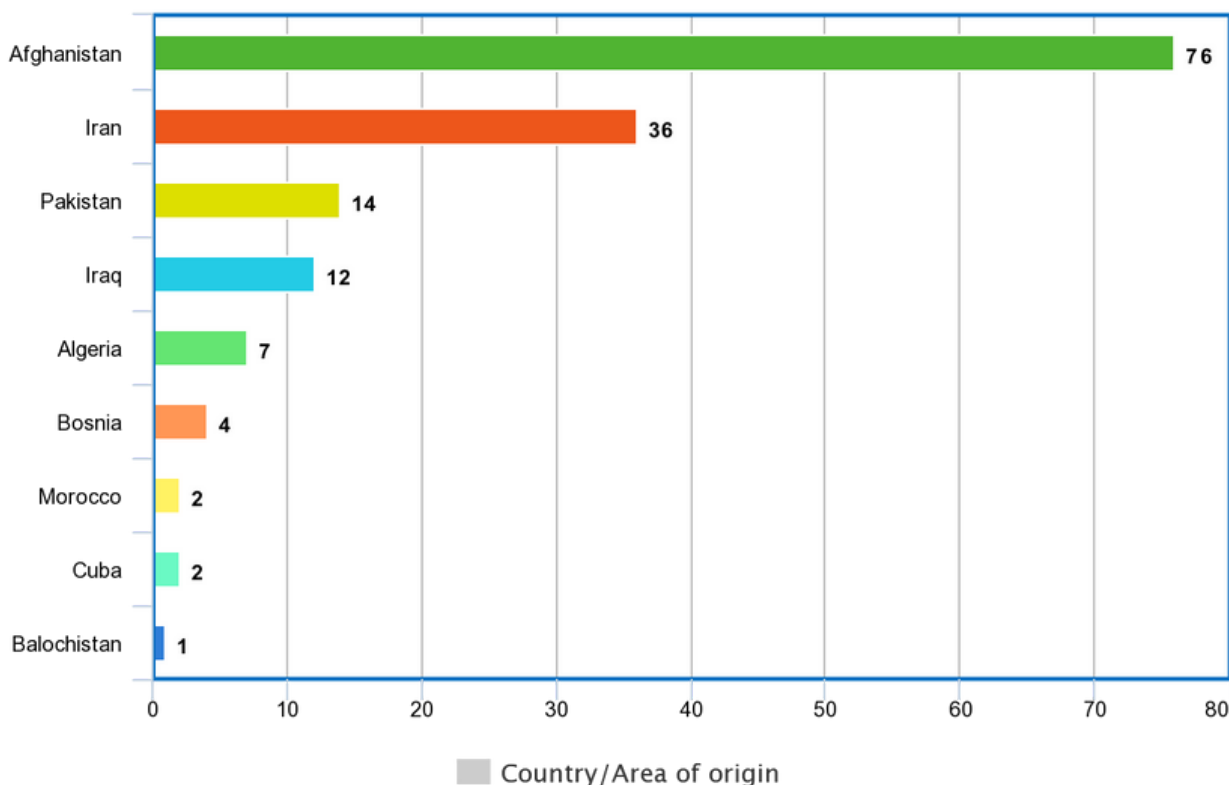
The total number of patients seen in January was 154, approx 25% of these patients were new patients. Just 27 patients were female whereas over 80% were male. This might be due to the cold weather and whereas females tend to stay in family groups meaning that they might not go on "game" as frequently meaning they have fewer injuries/medical needs.

Most of the patients were between the ages of 18 - 30years old. Just 6 patients were seen under the age of 10 years old but this could be due to Croatia reducing the number of pushbacks just before Christmas when a lot of families traveled and ended up in the camp near Zagreb.



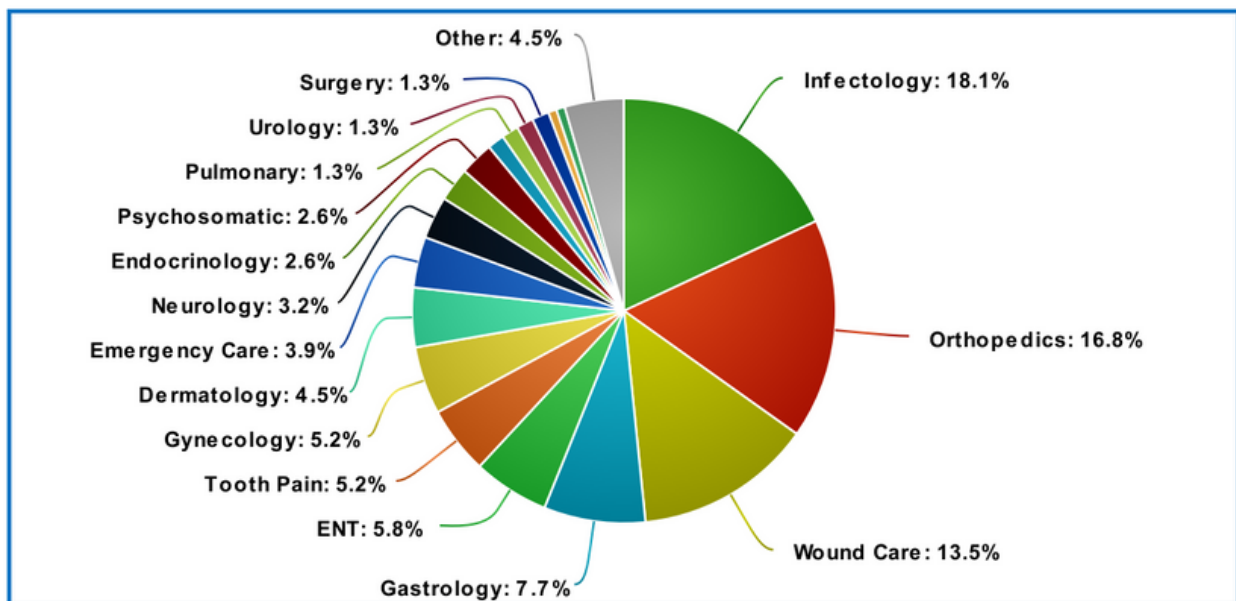
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The most common country of origin is Afghanistan which accounted for nearly 50% of all our patients. We saw a few POMs from Cuba and one patient from Balochistan.



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The top 5 reasons for seeing people were due to the following diagnosis; Infectology, Orthopedics, Wound Care, Gastrology and Ears, Nose, and throat (ENT) problems.



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Although many of the cases seen by the Bosnian team were primary care cases, there were a couple of emergency cases. Even the smallest problems, when living in the conditions people are forced to live in on our borders to the EU can become massive problems. The recent cold weather and snow make life even more difficult for the people MVI treats.

One interesting case the team saw this month was a man in his 30's. He presented with tremors to his arms and legs. This problem occurred since leaving his homeland however during his long journey, it had developed and worsened. Due to the situation right now in Bosnia, it really isn't possible to have further investigations as a POM. The Doctor on the team managed to treat the patient to help reduce the symptoms, meaning he can continue to try and get into the EU to claim asylum. The team will continue to monitor the patient and provide him with a medical letter for him to seek advice from a Neurological Specialist once in a better situation. This patient needs urgent assessment however once again due to EU policy, people in need are suffering at our borders.

Sadly, this month we have seen a few brutality cases inflicted by locals on the POMs. Two patients were attacked in the night by who they believed was a Bosnian man. They were attacked and sustained significant injuries. With input from the team, pain relief, and some exercises they managed to recover. However, sadly at the same time, they were robbed of their belonging such as their phones and power banks which helps them keep in touch with loved ones and keep them safe during the risky "game" of crossing the border from Bosnia, into the EU.

Another case of brutality was seen when some POMs were befriended by a Bosnian man. He offered them a safe place to stay in his house which was accepted as their living conditions were very poor in a squat. However, things quickly turned bad when the local man attacked them, robbed them, and threatened them. One of the POMs sustained a head injury and all were left quite traumatised following the ordeal. It is very hard after everything these POMS have been through for them to trust and this will have really affected their ability to trust in the future.

The team continues to work seeing patients in a large area that stretches for over 50kms.



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